

MOTHER  
GOOSE *for*  
GROWN-UPS



BY GUY WETMORE CARRYL

817 Caryl

Mother goose for grownups

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MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS







Peter Newell-1900

[p. 86

“ ‘ WILL YOU TELL ME IF IT’S STRAIGHT?’ ”

# MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

By GUY WETMORE CARRYL

With Illustrations by PETER

NEWELL and GUSTAVE VERBEEK



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1900

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## TO CONSTANCE

---

In memory of other days,  
Dear critic, when your whispered praise  
    Cheered on the limping pen.  
How short, how sweet those younger hours,  
How bright our suns, how few our showers,  
    Alas, we knew not then!

If but, long leagues across the seas,  
The trivial charm of rhymes like these  
    Shall serve to link us twain  
An instant in the olden spell  
That once we knew and loved so well,  
    I have not worked in vain!

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## NOTE

I HAVE pleasure in acknowledging the courteous permission of the editors to reprint in this form such of the following verses as were originally published in *Harper's Magazine*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and the *London Sketch*.

G. W. C.



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THE ADMIRABLE ASSERTIVENESS  
OF  
JILTED JACK



THE ADMIRABLE ASSERTIVENESS  
OF  
JILTED JACK

---

A noble and a generous mind  
Was Jack's ;  
Folks knew he would not talk behind  
Their backs :  
But when some maiden fresh and young,  
At Jack a bit of banter flung,  
She soon discovered that his tongue  
Was sharp as any ax.

A flirt of most engaging wiles  
Was Jill ;  
On Jack she lavished all her smiles,  
Until

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

Her slave (and he was not the first)  
Of lovesick swains became the worst,  
His glance a strong box might have burst,  
His sighs were fit to kill.

One April morning, clear and fair,  
When both  
Of staying home and idling there  
In sloth  
Were weary, Jack remarked to Jill :  
“Oh, what’s the sense in sitting still ?  
Let’s mount the slope of yonder hill.”  
And she was nothing loth.

But as she answered : “What’s the use ?”  
The gruff  
Young swain replied : “Oh, there’s excuse  
Enough.  
Your doting parents water lack ;  
We’ll fill a pail and bring it back.”  
(The reader will perceive that Jack  
Was putting up a bluff.)

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

Thus hand in hand the tempting hill

They scaled,

And Jack proposed a kiss to Jill,

And failed!

One backward start, one step too bold,

And down the hill the couple rolled,

Resembling, if the truth were told,

A luggage train derailed.

With eyes ablaze with anger, she

Exclaimed:

“Well, who’d have thought! You’d ought to be  
Ashamed!

You quite forget yourself, it’s plain,

So I’ll forget you, too. Insane

Young man, I’ll say *oafweederzane*.”

(Her German might be blamed.)

But Jack, whose linguist’s pride was pricked,

To shine,

Asked: “*Meine königin will nicht*

Be mine?”

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

And when she answered : “Nein” in spleen,  
He cried : “Then in the soup tureen  
You’ll stay. You’re not the only queen  
Discarded for a nein !”

THE MORAL’S made for maidens young

And small :

If you would in a foreign tongue

Enthrall,

Lead off undaunted in a Swede

Or Spanish speech, and you’ll succeed,

But they who in a German lead

No favor win at all.

THE BLATANT BRUTALITY  
OF  
LITTLE BOW PEEP



THE BLATANT BRUTALITY  
OF  
LITTLE BOW PEEP

---

Though she was only a shepherdess,  
Tending the meekest of sheep,  
Never was African leopardess  
Crosser than Little Bow Peep :  
Quite apathetic, impassible  
People described her as : “ That  
Wayward, contentious, irascible,  
Testy, cantankerous brat ! ”

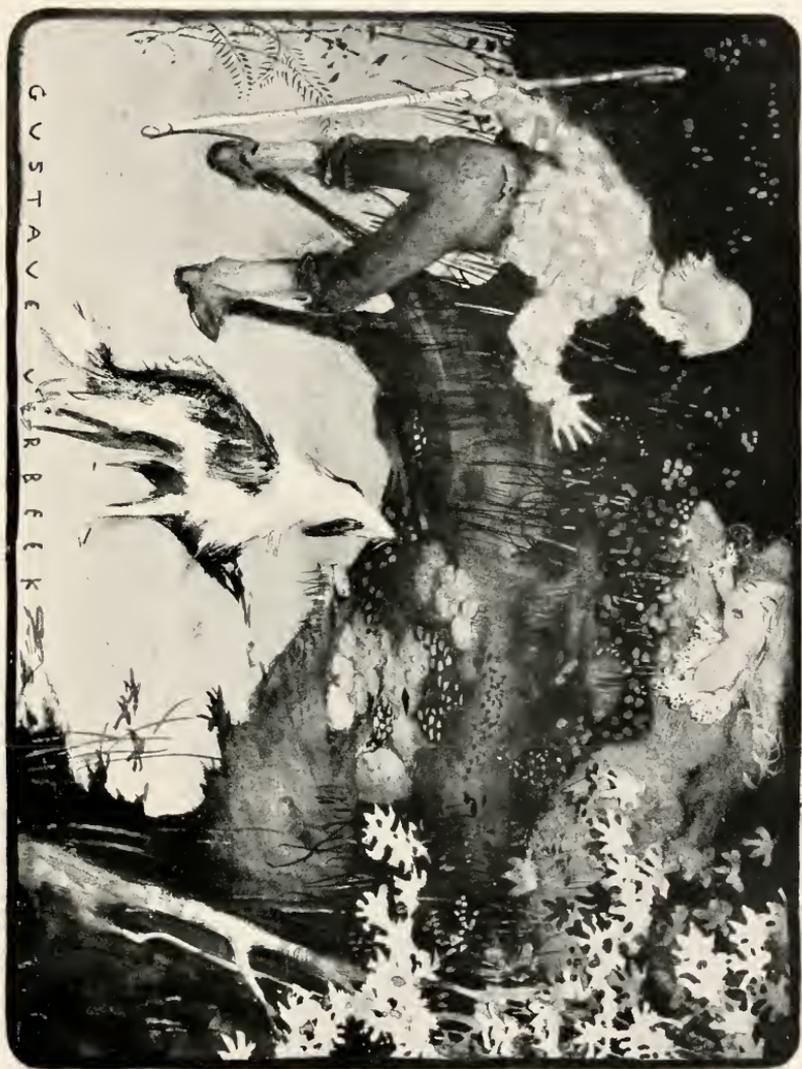
Yet, as she dozed in a grotto-like  
Sort of a kind of a nook,  
She was so charmingly Watteau-like,  
What with her sheep and her crook ;

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

“She is a dryad or nymph,” any  
Casual passer would think.  
Poets pronounced her a symphony,  
All in the palest of pink.

Thus it was not enigmatical,  
That the young shepherd who first  
Found her asleep, in ecstatical  
Sighs of felicity burst :  
Such was his sudden beatitude  
That, as he gazed at her so,  
Daphnis gave vent to this platitude :  
“My ! Ain’t she elegant though !”

Roused from some dream of Arcadia,  
Little Bow Peep with a start  
Answered him : “I ain’t afraid o’ yer !  
P’raps you imagine you’re smart !”  
Daphnis protested impulsively,  
Blushing as red as a rose ;  
All was in vain. She convulsively  
Punched the young man in the nose !



GUSTAVE  
V. R. B. E. K.



MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

All of it's true, every word of it!

I was not present to peep,  
But if you ask how I heard of it,  
Please to remember the sheep.

There is no need of excuse. You will

See how such scandals occur:  
If you recall Mother Goose, you will  
Know what tail-bearers they were!

MORAL: This pair irreclaimable

Might have made Seraphim weep,  
But who can pick the most blamable?

*Both saw a little beau peep!*



THE COMMENDABLE CASTIGATION  
OF  
OLD MOTHER HUBBARD



THE COMMENDABLE CASTIGATION  
OF  
OLD MOTHER HUBBARD

---

She was one of those creatures  
Whose features  
Are hard beyond any reclaim ;  
And she loved in a hovel  
To grovel,  
And she hadn't a cent to her name.  
She owned neither gallants  
Nor talents ;  
She borrowed extensively, too,  
From all of her dozens  
Of cousins,  
And never refunded a *sou* :  
Yet all they said in abuse of her  
Was : " She is prouder than Lucifer !"  
(That, I must say, without meaning to blame,  
Is always the way with that kind of a dame !)

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

There never was jolli-  
Er colley  
Than Old Mother Hubbard had found,  
Though cheaply she bought him,  
She'd taught him  
To follow her meekly around :  
But though she would lick him  
And kick him,  
It never had any effect ;  
He always was howling  
And growling,  
But goodness ! What could you expect ?  
Colleys were never to flourish meant  
'Less they had plenty of nourishment,  
All that he had were the feathers she'd pluck  
Off an occasional chicken or duck.

The colley was barred in  
The garden,  
He howled and he wailed and he whined.  
The neighbors indignant,  
Malignant  
Petitions unanimous signed.

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

“The nuisance grows nightly,”

Politely

They wrote. “It’s an odious hound,  
And either you’ll fill him,

Or kill him,

Or else he must go to the pound.

For if this howling infernally

Is to continue nocturnally—

Pardon us, ma’am, if we seem to be curt—

Somebody’s apt to get horribly hurt!”

Mother Hubbard cried loudly

And proudly :

“Lands sakes ! but you give yourselves airs !

I’ll take the law to you

And sue you.”

The neighbors responded : “Who cares ?

We none of us care if

The sheriff

Lock every man jack of us up ;

We won’t be repining

At fining

So long as we’re rid of the pup !”

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

They then proceeded to mount a sign,  
Bearing this ominous countersign :

“ FREEMEN ! THE MOMENT HAS COME TO PROTEST  
AND OLD MOTHER HUBBARD DELENDUM EST ! ”

They marched to her gateway,

And straightway

They trampled all over her lawn ;

Most rudely they harried

And carried

Her round on a rail until dawn.

They marred her, and jarred her,

And tarred her

And feathered her, just as they should,

Of speech they bereft her,

And left her

With : “ *Now* do you think you’ll be good ! ”

THE MORAL’S a charmingly pleasing one.

While we would deprecate teasing one,

Still, when a dame has politeness rebuffed,

She certainly ought to be collared and cuffed.

THE DISCOURAGING DISCOVERY  
OF  
LITTLE JACK HORNER



THE DISCOURAGING DISCOVERY  
OF  
LITTLE JACK HORNER

---

A knack almost incredible for dealing with  
an edible

Jack Horner's elder sister was acknowledged  
to display ;

She labored hard and zealously, but always  
guarded jealously

The secrets of the dishes she invented every  
day.

She'd take some indigestible, unpopular co-  
mestible,

And to its better nature would so tenderly  
appeal

That Jack invoked a benison upon a haunch  
of venison,

When ready she was serving him a little  
leg of veal !

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

Jack said she was a miracle. The word was  
not satirical,

For daily climbing upward, she excelled her-  
self at last :

The acme of facility, the zenith of ability

Was what she gave her brother for his  
Christmas Day repast.

He dined that evening eagerly and anything  
but meagerly,

And when he'd had his salad and his quart  
of Extra Dry,

With sisterly benignity, and just a touch of  
dignity,

She placed upon the table an unutterable pie !

Unflagging pertinacity, and technical sagacity,  
Long nights of sleepless vigil, and long days  
of constant care

Had been involved in making it, improving it,  
and baking it,

Until of other pies it was the wonder and  
despair :

## MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

So princely and so prominent, so solemn,  
so predominant

It looked upon the table, that, with fasci-  
nated eye,

The youth, with sudden wonder struck, electri-  
fied, and thunder struck,

Could only stammer stupidly: "Oh Golly!  
What a pie!"

In view of his satiety, it almost seemed impiety

To carve this crowning triumph of a culinary life,  
But, braced by his avidity, with sudden in-  
trepidity

He broke its dome imposing with a common  
kitchen knife.

Ah, hideous fatality! for when with eager  
palate he

Commenced to eat, he happened on an  
accident uncouth,

And cried with stifled moan: "Of it one plum  
I tried. The stone of it

Had never been extracted, and I've broke a  
wisdom tooth!"

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

Jack's sister wept effusively, but loudly and abusively

His unreserved opinion of her talents he proclaimed ;

He called her names like "driveller" and "simpleton" and "sniveller,"

And others, which to mention I am really too ashamed.

THE MORAL : It is saddening, embarrassing, and maddening

A stone to strike in what you thought was paste. One thing alone

Than this mischance is crueller, and that is for a jeweller

To strike but paste in what he fondly thought to be a stone.

THE EMBARRASSING EPISODE  
OF  
LITTLE MISS MUFFET



THE EMBARRASSING EPISODE  
OF  
LITTLE MISS MUFFET

---

Little Miss Muffet discovered a tuffet,  
    (Which never occurred to the rest of us)  
And, as 'twas a June day, and just about noonday,  
    She wanted to eat—like the best of us :  
Her diet was whey, and I hasten to say  
    It is wholesome and people grow fat on it.  
The spot being lonely, the lady not only  
    Discovered the tuffet, but sat on it.

A rivulet gabbled beside her and babbled,  
    As rivulets always are thought to do,  
And dragon-flies sported around and cavorted,  
    As poets say dragon-flies ought to do ;

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

When, glancing aside for a moment, she spied  
A horrible sight that brought fear to her,  
A hideous spider was sitting beside her  
And most unavoidably near to her!

Albeit unsightly, this creature politely  
Said: "Madam, I earnestly vow to you,  
I'm penitent that I did not bring my hat. I  
Should otherwise certainly bow to you."  
Though anxious to please, he was so ill at ease  
That he lost all his sense of propriety,  
And grew so inept that he clumsily stepped  
In her plate—which is barred in Society.

This curious error completed her terror;  
She shuddered, and growing much paler, not  
Only left tuffet, but dealt him a buffet  
Which doubled him up in a sailor-knot.  
It should be explained that at this he was pained:  
He cried: "I have vexed you, no doubt of it!  
Your fist's like a truncheon." "You're still in my  
luncheon,"  
Was all that she answered. "Get out of it!"

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

And THE MORAL is this : Be it madam or miss  
To whom you have something to say,  
You are only absurd when you get in the curd  
But you're rude when you get in the whey.



THE FEARFUL FINALE  
OF THE  
IRASCIBLE MOUSE



THE FEARFUL FINALE  
OF THE  
IRASCIBLE MOUSE

---

Upon a stairway built of brick  
A pleasant-featured clock  
From time to time would murmur "Tick"  
And vary it with "Tock":  
Although no great intelligence  
There lay in either word,  
They were not meant to give offence  
To anyone who heard.

Within the pantry of the house,  
Among some piles of cheese,  
There dwelt an irritable mouse,  
Extremely hard to please:

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

His appetite was most immense.  
Each day he ate a wedge  
Of Stilton cheese. In consequence  
His nerves were all on edge.

With ill-concealed impatience he,  
Upon his morning walk,  
Had heard the clock unceasingly,  
Monotonously talk,  
Until his rage burst every bound.  
He gave a fretful shout :  
“Well, sakes alive ! It’s time I found  
What all this talk’s about.”

With all the admirable skill  
That marks the rodent race  
The mouse ran up the clock, until  
He’d crept behind the face,  
And then, with words that no one ought  
To use, and scornful squeals,  
He cried aloud : “Just what I thought !  
Great oaf, you’re full of wheels !”

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

The timepiece sternly said : "Have done !"

And through the silent house  
It struck emphatically one.

(But that one was the mouse !)  
To earth the prowling rodent fell,  
In terror for his life,  
And turned to flee, but, sad to tell,  
There stood the farmer's wife.

She did not faint, she did not quail,  
She did not cry out : "Scat !"  
She simply took him by the tail  
And gave him to the cat,  
And, with a stern, triumphant look,  
She watched him clawed and cleft,  
And with some blotting paper took  
Up all that there was left.

THE MORAL : In a farmer's home  
Run down his herds, his flocks,  
Run down his crops, run down his loam,  
But when it comes to clocks,

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

Pray leave them ticking every one  
In peace upon their shelves :  
When running down is to be done  
The clocks run down themselves.

THE GASTRONOMIC GUIDE  
OF  
SIMPLE SIMON



THE GASTRONOMIC GUILD  
OF  
SIMPLE SIMON

---

Conveniently near to where  
    Young Simple Simon dwelt  
There was to be a county fair,  
    And Simple Simon felt  
That to the fair he ought to go  
In all his Sunday clothes, and so,  
Determined to behold the show,  
    He put them on and went.  
(One-half his clothes was borrowed and the other  
    half was lent.)

He heard afar the cheerful sound  
    Of horns that people blew,  
Saw wooden horses swing around  
    A circle, two and two,

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

Beheld balloons arise, and if  
He scented with a gentle sniff  
The smells of pies, what is the dif-  
ference to me or you?  
(You cannot say my verse is false, because I  
know it's true.)

As Simple Simon nearer came  
To these attractive smells,  
Avoiding every little game  
Men played with walnut shells,  
He felt a sudden longing rise.  
The sparkle in his eager eyes  
Betrayed the fact he yearned for pies :  
The eye the secret tells.  
('Tis known the pie of county fairs all other pies  
excels.)

So when he saw upon the road,  
Some fifty feet away,  
A pieman, Simple Simon strode  
Toward him, shouting : " Hey !



“NOW SIMON’S TASTES WERE MOST PROFUSE”



MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

What kinds?" as lordly as a prince.  
The pieman said: "I've pumpkin, quince,  
Blueberry, lemon, peach, and mince:

And, showing his array,

He added: "Won't you try one, sir? They're very  
nice to-day."

Now Simon's taste was most profuse,

And so, by way of start,

He ate two cakes, a Charlotte Russe,

Six buns, the better part

Of one big gingerbread, a pair

Of lady-fingers, an éclair,

And ten assorted pies, and there,

His hand upon his heart,

He paused to choose between an apple dumpling  
and a tart.

Observing that upon his tray

His goods were growing few,

The pieman cried: "I beg to say

That patrons such as you

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

One does not meet in many a moon.  
Pray, won't you try this macaroon?"  
But soon suspicious, changed his tune,  
Continuing: "What is due  
I beg respectfully to add's a dollar twenty-two."

Then Simple Simon put a curb  
Upon his appetite,  
And turning with an air superb  
He suddenly took flight,  
While o'er his shoulder this absurd  
And really most offensive word  
The trusting pieman shortly heard  
To soothe his bitter plight:  
"Perhaps I should have said before your wares are  
out of sight."

THE MORAL is a simple one,  
But still of consequence.  
We've seen that Simon's sense of fun  
Was almost too intense:

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

Though blaming his deceitful guise,  
We with the pieman sympathize,  
The latter we must criticize

Because he was so dense :

He might have known from what he ate that  
Simon had no cents.



THE HARMONIOUS HEEDLESSNESS  
OF  
LITTLE BOY BLUE



THE HARMONIOUS HEEDLESSNESS  
OF  
LITTLE BOY BLUE

---

Composing scales beside the rails  
That flanked a field of corn,  
A farmer's boy with vicious joy  
Performed upon a horn :  
The vagrant airs, the fragrant airs  
Around that field that strayed,  
Took flight before the flagrant airs  
That noisome urchin played.

He played with care "The Maiden's Prayer ;"  
He played "God Save the Queen,"  
"Die Wacht am Rhein," and "Auld Lang Syne,"  
And "Wearing of the Green :"

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

With futile toots, and brutal toots,  
    And shrill chromatic scales,  
And utterly inutile toots,  
    And agonizing wails.

The while he played, around him strayed,  
    And calmly chewed the cud,  
Some thirty-nine assorted kine,  
    All ankle-deep in mud :  
They stamped about and tramped about  
    That mud, till all the troupe  
Made noises, as they ramped about,  
    Like school-boys eating soup.

Till, growing bored, with one accord  
    They broke the fence forlorn :  
The field was doomed. The cows consumed  
    Two-thirds of all the corn,  
And viciously, maliciously,  
    Went prancing o'er the loam.  
That landscape expeditiously  
    Resembled harvest-home.

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

“Most idle ass of all your class,”

The farmer said with scorn :

“Just see my son, what you have done !

The cows are in the corn !”

“Oh drat,” he said, “the brat !” he said.

The cowherd seemed to rouse.

“My friend, it’s worse than that,” he said.

“The corn is in the cows.”

THE MORAL lies before our eyes.

When tending kine and corn,

Don’t spend your noons in tooting tunes

Upon a blatant horn :

Or scaling, and assailing, and

With energy immense,

Your cows will take a railing, and

The farmer take offense.



THE INEXCUSABLE IMPROBITY  
OF  
TOM, THE PIPER'S SON



THE INEXCUSABLE IMPROBITY  
OF  
TOM, THE PIPER'S SON

---

A Paris butcher kept a shop  
    Upon the river's bank  
Where you could buy a mutton chop  
    Or two for half a franc.

The little shop was spruce and neat,  
In view of all who trod the street  
The decorated joints of meat  
    Were hung up in a rank.

This Gallic butcher led a life  
    Of highly moral tone ;  
He never raised his voice in strife,  
    He never drank alone :

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

He simply sat outside his door  
And slept from eight o'clock till four ;  
The more he slept, so much the more  
    To slumber he was prone.

One day outside his shop he put  
    A pig he meant to stuff,  
And carefully around each foot  
    He pinned a paper ruff,  
But, while a watch he should have kept,  
His habit conquered, and he slept,  
And for a thief who was adept  
    That surely was enough.

A Scottish piper dwelt near by,  
    Whose one ungracious son  
Beheld that pig and murmured : " Why,  
    No sooner said than done !  
It seems to me that this I need."  
And grasping it, with all his speed  
Across the Pont des Invalides  
    He started on a run.

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

Then, turning sharply to the right,  
Without a thought of risk,  
He fled. 'Tis fair to call his flight  
Inordinately brisk.  
But now the town was all astir,  
In vain his feet he strove to spur,  
They caught him, shouting: "Au voleur!"  
Beside the Obelisk.

The breathless butcher cried: "A mort!"  
The crowd said: "Conspuez!"  
And some: "A bas!" and half a score  
Responded: "Vive l'armée!"  
While grim gendarmes with piercing eye,  
And stern remarks about: "Canaille!"  
The pig abstracted on the sly.  
Such is the Gallic way!

The piper's offspring, his defeat  
Deep-rooted in his heart,  
A revolutionary sheet  
Proceeded then to start.

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

Thenceforward every evening he  
In leaders scathed the Ministry,  
And wished he could accomplish the  
Return of Bonaparte.

THE MORAL is that when the press  
Begins to rave and shout  
It's often difficult to guess  
What it is all about.  
The editor we strive to pin,  
But we can never find him in.  
What startling knowledge we should win  
If we could find him out!

THE JUDICIOUS JUDGMENT  
OF  
QUITE CONTRARY MARY



THE JUDICIOUS JUDGMENT  
OF  
QUITE CONTRARY MARY

---

Though Mary had the kind of face  
    The rudest wind would softly blow on ;  
Though she was full of simple grace,  
    Sweet, amiable, and kind, and so on ;  
I would not have you understand  
    That she was meek. You'd be mistaken.  
She worked out logarithms, and  
    Her favorite essayist was Bacon.

And, though not positive, I think  
    She'd heard about Savonarola,  
Had studied Maurice Maeterlinck,  
    And read the works of Emile Zola,

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

And Emerson's and some of Kant's,  
And all of mine and Shopenhauer's ;  
But still she cultivated plants,  
And spent her life in tending flowers.

She had a little hedge of box,  
Azalias, and a bed of tansy,  
A double row of hollyhocks,  
And every different kind of pansy :  
And, though so innocent of look,  
She'd lovers by the scores and dozens,  
And learned, by talking with the cook,  
To tell her friends they were her cousins.

The first was French, the second Greek,  
The third was born upon the Mersey,  
The fourth one came from Mozambique,  
The fifth one from the Isle of Jersey.  
I cannot tell about the rest,  
But, judging from their dress and faces,  
They came from north, east, south, and west,  
But all of them from different places.

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

Now, such was Mary's sense of pride,  
Despite their fervent protestations,  
Before she vowed to be a bride  
She set them all examinations :  
She asked each one to tell the date  
Of Washington and Cleopatra,  
Name Dickens' novels, and locate  
The site of Yonkers and Sumatra.

But so it chanced that, from a score  
Of suitors resolute and haughty,  
One gained a mark of sixty-four,  
And all the rest were under forty.  
One swain alone the rest outclassed ;  
Because of one audacious guess, he  
This strict examination passed  
When Mary asked the date of Crécy.

THE MORAL shows that when a maid  
Her life devotes unto a garden,  
When horticultural skill's displayed  
Her heart she does not dare to harden.

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

So crafty suitors, scorn the fates  
And you may lay this flattering balm to  
Your souls ; if you but get your dates  
The chances are you'll get the palm, too!

THE LINGUISTIC LANGUOR  
OF  
CHARLES AUGUSTUS SPRAGUE



THE LINGUISTIC LANGUOR  
OF  
CHARLES AUGUSTUS SPRAGUE

---

A child of nature curious  
Was Charles Augustus Sprague ;  
He made his parents furious  
Because he was so vague :  
Although his age was nearly two  
Eleven words were all he knew,  
These sounded much as sounds the Dutch  
That's spoken at The Hague.

A few of his errata  
'Tis just I should avow,  
He called his mother "Tata,"  
And "moo" he dubbed a cow,

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

Nor was it altogether plain  
Why "choo-choo" meant a railway train.  
He called a cat "miouw," and that  
No purist would allow.

Within his father's orchard  
There stood, for all to see,  
With branches bent and tortured,  
An ancient apple tree :  
That Charles Augustus Sprague might drowse  
His mother on its swaying boughs  
His cradle hung, and, while it swung,  
She sang with energy.

A sudden blow arising  
One day, the branches broke,  
With suddenness surprising  
The sleeping babe awoke,  
And crashing down to earth he fell.  
Ah me, that I should have to tell  
The words that mild and genial child  
On this occasion spoke !

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

His face convulsed and chequered  
With passion and with tears,  
He blotted out the record  
Of both his speechless years :  
His mother stupefied, aghast,  
Heard Charles Augustus speak at last ;  
He opened wide his mouth and cried  
These ill conditioned sneers.

“Sapristi ! Accidente !  
Perchance my speech is late,  
But, be she two or twenty,  
A nincompoop I hate !  
What idiot said that woman’s ‘planned  
To warn, to comfort, and command ?’”  
His words I quench. Excuse my French—  
Je dis que tu m’embêtes !

THE MORAL : Common clocks, we find,  
In silence take a sudden wind,  
But only heroes, as we know,  
In silence take a sudden blow.



THE MYSTERIOUS MISAPPREHENSION  
CONCERNING  
A MAN IN OUR TOWN



THE MYSTERIOUS MISAPPREHENSION  
CONCERNING  
A MAN IN OUR TOWN

---

There was a man in our town,  
Half beggar, half rascalion,  
Who, just because his eyes were brown,  
Was thought to be Italian :  
And, though with much insistance  
He said that people erred,  
And bitterly to Italy  
He frequently referred,  
The false report, as is the way  
Of false reports, had come to stay !

So every one who'd been to Rome  
By aid of Cook's or Gaze's,  
Would call upon him at his home  
To flaunt Italian phrases.

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

“Capite Questa lingua ?”  
The inquiry would be :  
“Pochissimo ? Benissimo !  
Vi prego, ditemi,  
Siete voi contento qua,  
Lontano dall’ Italia ?”

The victim, plunged in deep disgust,  
Grew nervous, could not slumber ;  
Said he, “I’m called Italian, just  
Because my eyes are umber,  
And if this persecution  
Is ever to be stopped,  
Some stern and stoic, hard, heroic  
Course I must adopt !”  
And so, to everyone’s surprise,  
He calmly scratched out both his eyes !

The neighbors said : “So strange a thing  
Might seem to be an omen.  
We *thought* his wits were wandering,  
But now we *know* they’re Roman !”

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

And so at him by legions,  
By be vies, hosts, and herds,  
Professors, purists, tramps, and tourists  
Screamed Italian words.  
Perceiving all he'd done was vain,  
He scratched his eyesight in again.

THE MORAL : If your neighbors say  
You're one thing or another,  
You'll find there isn't any way  
Their prejudice to smother.  
What matter if they think you  
From Italy or Greece ?  
I beg you, treasure no displeasure :  
Bow and hold your peace.  
Like Omar, underneath the bow  
You'll find there's paradise enow !



THE OPPORTUNE OVERTHROW  
OF  
HUMPTY DUMPTY



THE OPPORTUNE OVERTHROW  
OF  
HUMPTY DUMPTY

---

Upon a wall of medium height  
Bombastically sat  
A boastful boy, and he was quite  
Unreasonably fat :  
And what aroused a most intense  
Disgust in passers-by  
Was his abnormal impudence  
In hailing them with " Hi !"  
While by his kicks he loosened bricks  
The girls to terrify.

When thus for half an hour or more  
He'd played his idle tricks,  
And wounded something like a score  
Of people with the bricks,

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

A man who kept a fuel shop  
    Across from where he sat  
Remarked : " Well, this has got to stop."  
    Then, snatching up his hat,  
And sallying out, began to shout :  
    " Look here ! Come down from that !"

The boastful boy to laugh began,  
    As laughs a vapid clown,  
And cried : " It takes a bigger man  
    Than you to call me down !  
This wall is smooth, this wall is high,  
    And safe from every one.  
No acrobat could do what I  
    Had been and gone and done !"  
Though this reviled, the other smiled,  
    And said : " Just wait, my son !"

Then to the interested throng  
    That watched across the way  
He showed with smiling face a long  
    And slender Henry Clay,



“WHILE BY KICKS HE LOOSENED BRICKS”



MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

Remarking: "In upon my shelves  
All kinds of coal there are.  
Step in, my friends, and help yourselves.  
And he who first can jar  
That wretched urchin off his perch  
Will get this good cigar."

The throng this task did not disdain,  
But threw with heart and soul,  
Till round the youth there raged a rain  
Of lumps of cannel-coal.  
He dodged for all that he was worth,  
Till one bombardier deft  
Triumphant brought him down to earth,  
Of vanity bereft.  
"I see," said he, "that this is the  
Coal day when I get left."

THE MORAL is that fuel can  
Become the tool of fate  
When thrown upon a little man,  
Instead of on a grate.

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

This story proves that when a brat  
Imagines he's admired,  
And acts in such a fashion that  
He makes his neighbors tired,  
That little fool, who's much too cool ;  
Gets warmed when coal is fired.

THE PREPOSTEROUS PERFORMANCE  
OF  
AN OLD LADY OF BANBURY



THE PREPOSTEROUS PERFORMANCE  
- OF  
AN OLD LADY OF BANBURY

---

Within a little attic a retiring, but erratic  
Old lady (six-and-eighty, to be frank),  
Made sauces out of cranberry for all the town  
of Banbury,  
Depositing the proceeds in the bank.  
Her tendency to thriftiness, her scorn of any  
shiftiness  
Built a bustling business, and in course  
Of time her secret yearnings were revealed,  
and all her earnings  
She squandered in the purchase of a horse.

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

“I am not in a hurry for a waggonette or  
surrey,”

She said. “In fact, I much prefer to ride.”  
And spite of all premonishment, to everyone’s  
astonishment,

The gay old lady did so—and astride!  
Now this was most periculou, but, what was  
more ridiculous,

The horse she bought had pulled a car,  
and so,  
The lazy steed to cheer up, she’d a bell upon  
her stirrup,

And rang it twice to make the creature go!  
I blush the truth to utter, but it seems a  
pound of butter

And thirty eggs she had to sell. Of course,  
In scorn of ways pedestrian, this fatuous  
equestrian

To market gaily started on the horse.  
Becoming too importunate to hasten, the un-  
fortunate

Old lady plied her charger with a birch.

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

In view of all her cronies, this stupidest of  
ponies

Fell flat before the Presbyterian church !

If it should chance that one set a red Italian  
sunset

Beside a Beardsley poster, and a plaid  
Like any canny Highlander's beside a Fiji  
Islander's

Most variegated costume, and should add  
A Turner composition, and with clever intuition,  
To cap the climax, pile upon them all  
The aurora borealis, then veracity, not malice,  
Might claim a close resemblance to her fall.

At sight of her disaster, with arnica and plaster  
The neighbors ran up eagerly to aid.

They cried : " Don't do that offen, ma'am, or  
you will need a coffin, ma'am,

You've hurt your solar plexus, we're afraid.  
We hope your martyrdom'll let you notice  
what an omelette

You've made in half a jiffy. It is great ! "

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

She only clutched her bonnet (she had fallen  
flat upon it),

And answered: "Will you tell me if it's  
straight?"

THE MORAL'S rather curious: for often the  
penurious

Are apt to think old horses of account  
If you would ride, then seek fine examples of  
the equine,  
And don't look on a molehill as a mount.

THE QUIXOTIC QUEST  
OF  
THREE BLIND MICE



THE QUIXOTIC QUEST  
OF  
THREE BLIND MICE

---

A maiden mouse of an arrogant mind  
Had three little swains and all were blind.  
The reason for this I do not know,  
But I think it was love that made them so,  
For without demur they bowed to her,  
Though she treated them all with a high hauteur.  
She ruled them, schooled them, frequently fooled  
    them,  
Snubbed, tormented, and ridiculed them :  
Mice as a rule are much like men,  
So they swallowed their pride and called again.

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

The maiden mouse of an arrogant mind  
To morbid romance was much inclined.  
The reason for this I have not learned,  
But I think by novels her head was turned.  
She said that the chap who dared to nap  
One hour inside of the farmer's trap  
Might gain her, reign her, wholly enchain her,  
Woo her, win her, and thence retain her!  
Hope ran high in each suitor's breast,  
And all determined to stand the test.

The maiden mouse of an arrogant mind  
Laughed when she saw them thus confined.  
The reason for this I can't proclaim,  
But I know some girls who'd have done the same!  
As thus they kept to their word, and slept,  
The farmer's wife to the pantry step:  
She sought them, caught them, carefully brought  
    them  
Out to the light, and there she taught them  
How that chivalry often fails,  
By calmly cutting off all their tails!

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

The maiden mouse of an arrogant mind  
Treated her swains in a way unkind.  
The reason for this is not complex :  
That's always the way with the tender sex.  
With impudent hails she cried : "What ails  
You all, and where are your splendid tails?"  
She jeered so, sneered so, flouted and fleered so,  
Giggled, and altogether appeared so  
Lacking in heart, that her slaves grew bored,  
And threw up the sponge of their own accord.

The maiden mouse of an arrogant mind  
Watched and waited, and peaked and pined.  
The reason for this, I beg to state,  
Is all summed up in the words TOO LATE!  
THE MORAL intwined is : Love is blind,  
But he never leaves all his wits behind :  
You may beat him, cheat him, often defeat him,  
Though he be true with torture treat him :  
One of these days you'll be bereft,  
You think you're right, but you'll find you're left.



THE REMARKABLE REGIMEN  
OF  
THE SPRAT FAMILY



THE REMARKABLE REGIMEN  
OF  
THE SPRAT FAMILY

---

The Sprats were four in number,  
Including twins in kilts :  
All day Jack carted lumber,  
All day his wife made quilts.  
Thus heartlessly neglected  
Twelve hours in twenty-four,  
As might have been expected,  
The twins sat on the floor :  
And all the buttons, I should state,  
They chanced to find, they promptly ate.  
This was not meat, but still it's true  
We did the same when we were two.

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

The wife (whose name was Julia)  
    Maintained an ample board,  
But one thing was peculiar,  
    Lean meat she quite abhorred.  
Here also should be stated  
    Another fact : 'tis that  
Her spouse abominated  
    The very taste of fat.  
This contrast curious of taste  
Precluded any thought of waste,  
    For all they left of any meal  
    No self-respecting dog would steal.

No generous *table d'hôte* meal,  
    No dainties packed in tins,  
But only bowls of oatmeal  
    They gave the wretched twins ;  
And yet like princes pampered  
    Had lived those babes accursed,  
Could they have fed unhampered :—  
    I have not told the worst !

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

Since nothing from the dining-room  
Was left to feed the cook and groom,  
It seems that these domestics cruel  
Were led to steal the children's gruel!

The twins, all hopes resigning,  
And wounded to the core,  
Confined themselves to dining  
On buttons off the floor.

No passionate resentment  
The docile babes displayed :  
Each day in calm contentment  
Three hearty meals they made.  
And daily Jack and Mrs. Sprat  
Ate all the lean and all the fat,  
And every day the groom and cook  
The children's meal contrived to hook.

But when the twins grew older,  
As twins are apt to do,  
And, shoulder touching shoulder,  
Sat Sundays in their pew.

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

They saw no Christian glory  
    In parting with a dime,  
And in the offertory  
    Dropped buttons every time.  
Said they : "What's good enough for Sprats  
Is good enough for heathen brats."  
    (I most sincerely wish I knew  
    What was the heathen's point of view.)

THE MORAL : Anecdotes abound  
Of buttons in collections found.  
Thus on the wheels of progress go,  
And heathens reap what Christians sew !

THE SINGULAR SANGFROID  
OF  
BABY BUNTING



THE SINGULAR SANGFROID  
OF  
BABY BUNTING

---

Bartholomew Benjamin Bunting  
    Had only three passions in life,  
And one of the trio was hunting,  
    The others his babe and his wife :  
And always, so rigid his habits,  
    He frolicked at home until two,  
And then started hunting for rabbits,  
    And hunted till fall of the dew.

Belinda Bellonia Bunting,  
    Thus widowed for half of the day,  
Her duty maternal confronting,  
    With baby would patiently play.

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

When thus was her energy wasted  
    A patented food she'd dispense.  
(She had bought it the day that they pasted  
    The posters all over her fence.)

But Bonaparte Buckingham Bunting,  
    The infant thus blindly adored,  
Replied to her worship by grunting,  
    Which showed he was brutally bored.  
'Twas little he cared for the troubles  
    Of life. Like a crab on the sands,  
From his sweet little mouth he blew bubbles,  
    And threatened the air with his hands.

Bartholomew Benjamin Bunting  
    One night, as his wife let him in,  
Produced as the fruit of his hunting  
    A cottontail's velvety skin,  
Which, seeing young Bonaparte wriggle,  
    He gave him without a demur,  
And the babe with an aqueous giggle  
    He swallowed the whole of the fur!

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

Belinda Bellonia Bunting

Behaved like a consummate loon :  
Her offspring in frenzy confronting  
She screamed herself mottled maroon :  
She felt of his vertebræ spinal,  
Expecting he'd surely succumb,  
And gave him one vigorous, final,  
Hard prod in the pit of his tum.

But Bonaparte Buckingham Bunting,  
At first but a trifle perplexed,  
By a change in his manner of grunting  
Soon showed he was terribly vexed.  
He displayed not a sign of repentance  
But spoke, in a dignified tone,  
The only consecutive sentence  
He uttered. 'Twas : "Lemme alone."

THE MORAL : The parent that uses  
Precaution his folly regrets :  
An infant gets all that he chooses,  
An infant chews all that he gets.

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

And colics? He constantly has 'em  
So long as his food is the best,  
But he'll swallow with never a spasm  
What ostriches couldn't digest!

THE TOUCHING TENDERNESS  
OF  
KING KARL THE FIRST



THE TOUCHING TENDERNESS  
OF  
KING KARL THE FIRST

---

For hunger and thirst King Karl the First  
Had a stoical, stern disdain:  
The food that he ordered consistently bordered  
On what is described as plain.  
Much trouble his cook ambitiously took  
To tickle his frugal taste,  
But all of his savoury science and slavery  
Ended in naught but waste.

Said the steward: "The thing to tempt the King  
And charm his indifferent eye  
No doubt is a tasty, delectable pasty.  
Make him a blackbird pie!"

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

The cook at these words baked twenty-four birds,  
And set them before the King,  
And the two dozen odious, bold, and melodious  
Singers began to sing.

The King in surprise said: "Dozens of pies  
In the course of our life we've tried,  
But never before us was served up a chorus  
Like this that we hear inside!"  
With a thunderous look he ordered the cook  
And the steward before him brought,  
And with a beatified smile: "He is satisfied!"  
Both of these innocents thought.

"Of sinners the worst," said Karl the First,  
"Is the barbarous ruffian that  
A song-bird would slaughter, unless for his daughter  
Or wife he is trimming a hat.  
We'll punish you so for the future you'll know  
That from mercy you can't depart.  
Observe that your lenient, kind, intervenient  
King has a tender heart!"

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

He saw that the cook in a neighboring brook  
Was drowned (as he quite deserved),  
And he ordered the steward at once to be skewered.  
(The steward was much unnerved.)  
“It’s a curious thing,” said the merciful King,  
“That monarchs so tender are,  
So oft we’re affected that we have suspected that  
We are too kind by far.”

THE MORAL : The mercy of men and of Kings  
Are apt to be wholly dissimilar things.  
In spite of “The Merchant of Venice,” we’re pained  
To note that the quality’s sometimes strained.



THE UNUSUAL UBIQUITY  
OF  
THE INQUISITIVE GANDER



THE UNUSUAL UBIQUITY  
OF  
THE INQUISITIVE GANDER

---

A gander dwelt upon a farm  
And no one could resist him,  
For had he died, such was his charm,  
His neighbors would have missed him :  
His scorn for any loud display,  
His cheerful hissing day by day,  
Would win your heart in such a way  
You almost could have kissed him.

This bird was always nosing 'round.  
Most patiently he waited  
Until an open door he found,  
And then investigated.

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

He loved to poke, he loved to peek,  
In every knothole, so to speak,  
He quickly thrust his prying beak,  
For what was hid he hated.

The farm exhausted : "Now," said he :  
"My policy's expansion.  
When one's convinced how things should be  
The proper course he can't shun.  
His mind made up, he followed it,  
Relying on his native wit,  
And soon had wandered, bit by bit,  
Through all his master's mansion.

"At least," he said : "It's not my fault  
If everything's not seen to :  
I've gone from garret down to vault,  
And glanced into the lean-to.  
In every room I've chanced to stop ;  
A supervising glance to drop,  
I've looked below, I've looked on top,  
Behind, and in between, too !"

“ SHE PLUCKED HIM WITH RELENTLESS FROWN ”





MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

One thing alone he found to blame,  
As thus his time he squandered,  
For, seeing not the farmer's dame,  
Into her room he wandered,  
And mounting nimbly on the bed :  
"Why, bless my careful soul!" he said :  
"These pillows are as hard as lead.  
Now, how comes that?" he pondered.

The farmer's dame for half an hour  
Had watched the bird meander,  
And finding him within her power,  
She leaped upon the gander.  
"Why, how de do, my gander coy?"  
She shouted : "What will be my joy  
To dream to-night on you, my boy!"  
(This was no baseless slander.)

For with a stoutish piece of string  
Securely was this fool tied,  
And by a leg and by a wing  
Unto an oaken stool tied :

MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS

While, pinning towels around her gown,  
She plucked him with relentless frown,  
And stuffed the pillows with his down,  
And roasted him for Yuletide.

THE MORAL is : When you explore  
Don't try to be superior :  
Be cautious, and retire before  
Your safety grows inferior.  
'Tis best to stay upon the coast,  
Or some day you will be like most  
Of all that bold exploring host  
That's gone to the interior.

THE END





